

My name and address:

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Date of the hearing: March 11th at 11 AM

Bill name: An Act Concerning Residential Water Rates, Public Drinking Water Supply Emergencies and the Sellers of Bottled Water)

Support for Substitute SB 422

Dear Planning and Development Committee,
I am a faculty member in the department of Politics, Economics, and International Studies at the University of Hartford and also the director of the Environmental Studies program there. I have been researching environmental policy, particularly water policy, for the last thirteen years.

There are many reasons to reject the Niagara bottling plant proposal. Most importantly: water is a local resource essential for life and should not be sold off to the highest bidder. But a water bottling plant is not just a misuse of a critical resource; it also wastes tons of other non-renewable resources each year, including fossil fuels, energy, and plastic. Most of the plastics used for bottled water is not recycled, but instead is thrown into landfills or finds its way to our rivers and oceans, clogging these vital resources. Plastic debris in the ocean is estimated to total eight million tons each year. The plastics in our waterways slowly degrade over time as they are exposed to light, wind, and oxygen, forming microplastics that choke and entangle wildlife, pollute waterways, and enter the food chain.

A few facts about bottled water include:

--Making bottles to meet America's demand for bottled water uses more than 17 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel 1.3 million cars for a year.

--The energy we waste using bottled water would be enough to power 190,000 homes.

--Americans used about 50 billion plastic water bottles last year.

However, the U.S.'s recycling rate for plastic is only 23 percent, which

means 38 billion water bottles – more than \$1 billion worth of plastic – are wasted each year.”

[<https://www.banthebottle.net/bottled-water-facts/>]

Any bill proposed should, at minimum:

- **Protect residents, not water bottlers during a drought.** If the DPH declares a Drought Advisory, the production of bottled water for export out of state needs to stop.
- **Rescind water rate discounts for water bottlers.** They extract large amounts of our municipal water and spring water, fill the environment with plastic pollution, and profit while citizens are conserving and paying more.
- **Rescind the *Special Sewer Service Charge* discount for water bottlers (now known as the *Clean Water Project Charge*).** CT ratepayers have paid for years to build infrastructure for clean water; no discounts for corporations.
- **Re-establish a citizen MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) watch dog committee.**
- **Impose a moratorium on any new large capacity agreements** until the State Water Plan is completed and addresses the issue of water bottling companies diverting water out of watersheds.

I urge you to do the right thing. Support citizens, communities, and local resources instead of corporate interests.

Thank you,
Katharine